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S E C R E T ANKARA 000906

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: THREATS AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS UNDERSCORE NEED TO
DESIGNATE PJAK AS A TERRORIST GROUP

REF: 07 ANKARA 2918

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d).

¶1. (SBU) A spokesperson for the Party of Free Life for Kurdistan (PJAK) stated May 4 that PJAK had "changed its mind about the United States Government and we are standing against them now," AP reported May 5 from Qandil in northern Iraq. Peritan Derseem, described as a senior PJAK official, claimed some PJAK fighters wanted to avenge their comrades' deaths in strikes carried out by Turkish forces against PKK bases in northern Iraq by forming suicide squads, but added that "combatants" are under the control of the organization, which is against such attacks. "Maybe someday ... individual combatants might launch suicide attacks inside Iraq and Turkey, and even against American interests," Derseem continued.

¶2. (S) These PJAK statements again raise the need for the United States to designate PJAK as a terrorist organization. Extensive sensitive reporting points to extremely strong PKK ties to and control over PJAK, if in fact the two are not actually one entity. Present and former PKK members serve in PJAK. They use the same facilities in Qandil.

¶3. (S) Expanded efforts to counter PKK terrorism in northern Iraq by the United States, Turkey and Iraq have changed the dynamic of the struggle there. Not designating PJAK as a terrorist organization continues to leave us open to criticism from those who claim the United States is cooperating with it or plans to use it to undermine the Iranian regime. PJAK's non-designation allows it to serve as an alternate route for funding and supplies to the PKK. Embassy believes this threat by PJAK against American interests should provide a fresh impetus to designate it as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).

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